

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4852

INFO DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ZACCAGNINI "MEETS THE PRESS"

REF: A. ROME 18535

B. ROME 18326

1. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SECRETARY BENIGNO ZACCAGNINI APPEARED ON RAI'S TV'S TRIBUNA POLITICA (MEET THE PRESS FORMAT BUT PRIME TIME) EVENING OF DECEMBER 18. OVER 80 PERCENT OF TIME DEVOTED TO RECENT DECLARATION OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE (REF B) AND DC-PCI RELATIONS.

2. ZACCAGNINI WAS AS CLEAR WITH PRESS AS HE HAD BEEN WITH AMBASSADOR DAY BEFORE (REF A) IN STRESSING THAT A DEMOCRACY MUST MAINTAIN A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ROLES OF THE MAJORITY AND THE MINORITY. THIS FORMED BASIS FOR HIS "FIRM" NO TO THE "HISTORIC COMPROMISE." HE ALSO CLEARLY RAISED OTHER "HORN" OF ITALY'S DEMOCRATIC DILEMMA. HE AFFIRMED THAT A DEMOCRACY MUST CONSENT TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ALTERNATION BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND THE OPPOSITION IF THE VOTERS SO DECIDE. HE CLEARLY RAISED THE DC'S FUNDAMENTAL DOUBTS ABOUT THE PCI'S WILLINGNESS OR ABILITY TO LIVE BY THIS DEMOCRATIC TENET AND RELINQUISH POWER WERE THEY TO ONCE ACQUIRE IT. HE CONTINUED, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD A LEFTIST ALTERNATIVE" (PSI-PCI) BECOME

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THE MAJORITY, THE DC WOULD THEN PREFER TO KEEP DEMOCRACY

ALIVE BY ACCEPTING THE OBLIGATIONS OF OPPOSITION. HE OFFERED THE RECENT GRAND COALITION IN THE FRG AS PROOF THAT THE DIS-SOLUTION OF MAJORITY-MINORITY DISTINCTIONS BY FORMATION OF ALL ENCOMPASSING MAJORITIES NEITHER SERVES DEMOCRACY NOR PROVIDES REAL ANSWERS TO SOCIETIES' PROBLEMS.

3. WHEN REPEATEDLY PRESSED ON THE RECENT STATEMENTS OF CARDINAL POLETTI AND THE DECLARATION OF THE ITALIAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE HE DEFENDED BOTH BY DENYING THAT ONE SHOULD INTERPRET THEM AS ELECTORAL PLOYS AIMED AT THE ROME ELECTIONS. HE ELOQUENTLY DEFENDED THE RIGHT, EVEN DUTY, OF THE CHURCH TO EXPRESS ITS VIEWS ON SOCIAL ILLS AND TO ASK PEOPLE TO PUT THEIR CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES TO WORK TO SOLVE THEM. HE CLEVERLY ADDED THAT THE BEAUTY OF POLITICS IS THAT IT IS THEN UP TO EACH MAN TO TEST THE PRINCIPLES OF HIS INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE AGAINST THE HARD REALITIES OF THE WORLD.

4. ANOTHER INTERESTING LINE OF QUESTIONING INVOLVED ZACCAGNINI'S ORIGINAL DESIGNATION AS "PROVISIONAL PARTY SECRETARY" WITH GOAL OF GETTING PARTY ON REFORMIST TRACK. QUESTIONER CONTINUED THAT ACCORDING TO SOME THIS REFORMIST BENT HAS PUSHED THE PARTY LEFTWARD. IN RESPONSE ZACCAGNINI CONFIRMED THAT HE DID NOT "LOVE" HIS POSITION, BUT HE OFFERED NO HINTS OF WANTING TO LEAVE IT IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE CLAIMED TO BE MOVING DC BACK TO ITS POPULIST, SOCIALLY ENGAGED ROOTS FOLLOWING CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. HE SAID THAT IF OTHERS CHOSE TO CALL THIS A LEFTWARD MOVEMENT IT DID NOT DISPLEASE HIM, THOUGH HE STATED THAT HE NEVER CONSIDERED HIMSELF "A MAN OF THE LEFT." VOLPE

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 DEC 1975  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** PINT, IT, (ZACCAGNINI, BENIGNO)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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